

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06584 444 9

BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Boston Public Library

92-03-162

X

GOVDOC
BRA
4309

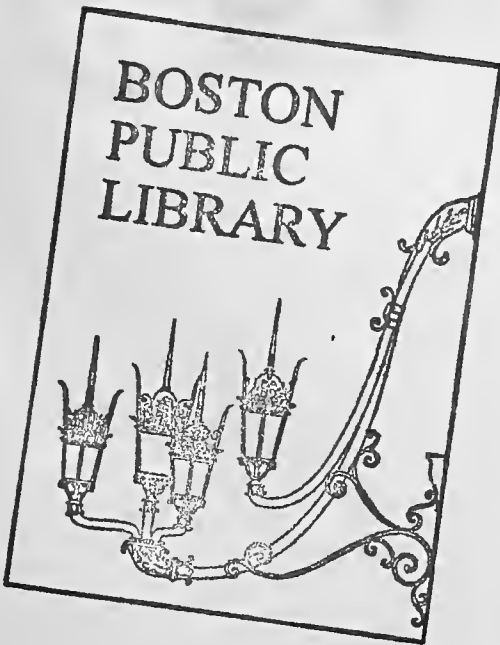
ROSWELL GLEASON HOUSE

PUBLIC HEARING

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

HELD AT: ROOM 921 BOSTON CITY HALL

DATED: JULY 26, 1977



~~Property Of~~
~~BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY~~
~~Library~~

C 69
B 124

ROSWELL GLEASON HOUSE

PUBLIC HEARING

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

HELD AT: ROOM 921 BOSTON CITY HALL

DATED: JULY 26, 1977

#8

ROSWELL GLEASON HOUSE

4 11-11

PUBLIC HEARING

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

HELD AT: ROOM 921 BOSTON CITY HALL

DATED: JULY 26, 1977

Russell
Gleason

11-26-77
Date

PLEASE SIGN BELOW IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK

note if you need to leave by a particular time today

ADDRESS

GROUP OR AGENCY
REPRESENTED, IF ANY

Tom Luc 92 Claybourne St. Lor. ney's neighbors
Jonathan Fairbanks M.P.O.

PUBLIC HEARING
BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HELD AT: ROOM 921 BOSTON CITY HALL
DATE: JULY 26, 1977

In attendance were the following:

Vice Chairman Roger Lang
Libby Blank
Thomas Hynes
Henry Wood
Martha Rothman
John Cooke
Susan Davis
Joan Goody
Margaret Smith
Carl Zellner

Marcia L. Myers, Executive Director

Marcia Myers, Executive Director, read the Notice of Public Hearing:

"Notice of Public Hearing:

The Boston Landmarks Commission will hold a public hearing on July 26, 1977, concerning the designation of the Roswell Gleason House at 101 Claybourne Street in Dorchester as a landmark according to the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975. The hearing will be held in Room 921 at Boston City Hall at 4:30 P.M. A report on the proposed designation will be available on July 5, 1977 at the offices of the Commission, Room 950, Boston City Hall."

Marcia Myers

Executive Director

Roger Lang explained the purpose of the public hearing to present the findings of the Study Report, to hear testimony both in support of and in opposition to the designation, and to acquire information which will help the Commission make a decision. Time will be allowed for written statements to be submitted for at least an additional three days after this hearing.

Roger Lang then asked if there were any persons present who wished to testify as expert witnesses. None came forward.

Marcia Myers, Executive Director, presented the definitions, criteria, and findings and recommendations of the Commission's Study Report concerning the Roswell Gleason House.

(From the Statutes creating Boston Landmark Commission, Chapter 772, Acts of 1975, she read the definition of a Landmark).

"Landmark, any physical feature or improvement designated by the commission in accordance with section four as a physical feature or improvement which in whole or part has historical, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance to the city and the Commonwealth, the New England region or the nation."

And, from Section 4:

"The commission may designate any improvement or physical feature as landmark, and may designate any area in the city as a landmark district, architectural conservation district and may amend any such designation herein provided upon a finding by the commission that the designation or amendment meets any of the following criteria:

- (a) Inclusion in National Register of Historic places as provided in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1977;
- (b) structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or nation;
- (c) structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages;

- (d) structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the Commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.

(Quoting from the Study Report)

"Property is located at 101 Claybourne Street, Dorchester, Ward 17."

"Type and Use;

The property, which occupies less than one acre (26,030 sq. ft.) is residential in type. The house was built as a single family dwelling by Roswell Gleason, c. 1840. It is currently vacant, and is owned by Mrs. Mary V. Bowker, granddaughter of Roswell Gleason."

"Historical Significance:

The historical significance of the Roswell Gleason House derives primarily from its association with its original owner. Roswell Gleason, besides being a successful businessman and manufacturer and a prominent resident of mid-19th century Dorchester, was a highly renowned pewterer whose work is included in most major collections of American pewter.

Born in Putney, Vermont in 1799, Gleason came to Dorchester in 1818 and apprenticed himself to a tinmaker. Upon his master's retirement four years later, 1822, Gleason established a business of his own, marrying Rebecca T. Vose of Dorchester that same year. Beginning with the manufacture of tin and pewter, he soon began producing britannia ware, while the size of his business steadily increased. After about 1850, at the urging of his "intimate friend" Daniel Webster, Gleason began producing silver plate, drawing his two sons into the business with him. This silver plate operation was reportedly the first of its kind in America, using skilled laborers and a newly perfected process imported by Gleason directly from England.

Largely due to this ability to adapt to changing tastes and to keep abreast of technical advances in manufacturing, as well as to his personal skill and efficiency, Gleason's operation continued to prosper until his retirement, following the death of his two sons and an explosion in his factory in 1871. Roswell Gleason died on January 27, 1887, a prominent, wealthy and respected citizen of Dorchester."

"Architectural Significance:

The Roswell Gleason House is perhaps the best extant Boston example of the transition from Greek to Gothic Revival styles in domestic architecture. The overall shape of the structure continues the gable-roofed box form of the standard Greek Revival house.

However, these traditional gabled boxes are firstly aligned in a cross shape and secondly decorated with stylistic elements that derive from the more current Gothic Revival style.

"Relationship to the Criteria for Landmark Designation

The Roswell Gleason House clearly meets the criteria for Landmark designation as established by Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 in that it is a structure which is associated with a historic personage, and which is of a distinguished architectural design embodying distinctive characteristics of a stylistic transition which makes it inherently valuable for study. As such, it is of significance to the City, the Commonwealth, the New England region and the nation."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommend that the Roswell Gleason House be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, and that the property be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The boundaries of the Landmark property should conform to the four adjacent parcels of land known as assessor's parcel numbers 2410, 2411, 2427, and 2428.

The standards and criteria recommended for administering the regulatory functions provided for in Chapter 772 are attached.

The Vice Chairman then asked if there were any potential witnesses here today represented by counsel. There was no response. He next repeated the question: Is there anyone who wishes to testify as an expert witness?" - to which there was no response.

STATEMENTS BY ELECTED OFFICIALS OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS HAVING REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES PROVIDED IN THE ENABLING STATUTES?

No testimony. "Is there any written record?"

A. (M. Myers) No. We were expecting to have Roy Bishop here from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, one of the reviewing agencies, but because of the fire in City Hall (just prior to this meeting), it was assumed that he had left and would be submitting a written statement. We also expect to have a written statement from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

STATEMENTS AND TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION:

REPRESENTATIVE OF OWNER:

Jeff McGuire, great nephew of Mrs. Bowker, owner of the property and representing the family, explained that the family would like to see the property designated IF something can be done about the vandalism, and if the Landmarks Commission has the money or can obtain the money to restore the house, and if someone can stay at the house and watch it. The house has been vandalized and broken into on numerous occasions. Mrs. Bowker has in her will that she wants the property down; however the family would like it designated if certain conditions can come true. Fire Department officials have cautioned the family that the house will

be burned down if it remains vacant. Heating is expensive - about \$550. per month. Mrs. Bowker has no means to keep up the property. Mrs. Bowker has sold much of the interior and furnishings to the Museum of Fine Arts. Her family are all scattered over the United States. There are no family members who could live there. Mrs. Bowker has recently paid almost \$8,000 in back taxes. House is assessed around \$9,000 because there are three lots of land within the parcel. With a \$252. tax rate, annual taxes are over \$2,000. The Family would like to see it disposed of before another tax bill is issued. The house was constructed in 1823 and completed in 1825. The marble staircase was finished in 1840.

OTHER INDIVIDUALS DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE PROPERTY APPEARING IN SUPPORT OF THE DESIGNATION: USER, OWNER?

No response.

ABUTTORS OR ANYONE FROM NEARBY AREA?

Mr. William Dalton, 93 Claybourne St., Dorchester, abutor for ten years, stated his agreement with the property being designated a Landmark, with the stipulation that it be sold as a private residence rather than a "half-way house". It should be something "substantial to the community" and should not detract from what the house should be. It will take a "special kind of person" to buy the house because of its age and its size and the work to be undertaken.

Tom Luce, 92 Claybourne Street, homeowner and neighbor of Mrs. Bowker for seven years spoke as an interested neighbor. He presented a

list of 12 names and addresses of interested neighbors who support the designation hoping that this will not mean the "kiss of death" for the house because of the bureaucracy involved in getting things done. (This was read and is attached.) Many neighbors have restored old homes in the neighborhood. They would like to see the house restored by a family who will live in it. There are some programs available such as 312 and neighborhood improvement programs to help with refinancing.

PROPERTY OWNERS, ABUTTORS, PEOPLE FROM NEARBY AREAS, RESIDENTS FROM NEARBY AREAS?

No response.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTEREST GROUPS, LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC AGENCIES TESTIFYING IN SUPPORT OF THE DESIGNATION:

Leslie Larson, President of City Conservation League, stated that the City Conservation League strongly endorses the designation of the property. He had hoped to have a member of the league, who is an expert on this house, present to testify, but possibly because of the fire at City Hall, the member did not appear. Mr. Larson stated that he was very impressed with the architectural significance of the house. He feels that rehabilitation and preservation will upgrade this neighborhood. There are realtors who specialize in selling properties such as this (i.e. Betty Gibson) and with some effort, a buyer could be found.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES OR INTEREST
GROUPS WHO WISH TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION:

Jonathan Fairbanks, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

To divide issues in support of designation vs. not in support of designation is a difficult issue for me because we have removed two rooms from the house - that is the Museum of Fine Arts has. That I consider a preservation act, because we were informed that the building would be burned. We are very happy if you get it designated. We would be pleased to have the house preserved as it is, and we'd lend a hand with our drawings for reproducing the woodwork. However, from a practical standpoint, I need to inform you that it will be a very expensive job to restore the house. It will run in the neighborhood of \$50-\$60,000 to restore the interior of the house. Whether you can find a person with that much wealth who would put it into this house, I don't know. I hope you would consider quite carefully what historic designation might mean. If it means tying up the house and not really getting someone in there to protect it, I'd say, don't do it, because you will lose everything in a fire. If you can't keep a fire out of City Hall, I don't know how you're going to keep a fire out of the house, unless somebody is living in it. Nobody has lived in it since March. We were quite open about this. Margaret Smith and Abbot Cummings knew about this long before we went over and removed the woodwork. It took months to make the drawings and move on this matter. It is, I think, the best preservation alternative: if you can't save it, then save pieces of it.

QUESTIONS FOR MR. FAIRBANKS:(L. Blank)

Q. Could you please describe a little more fully what you removed?

A. Parlor and dining room woodwork. We did not remove the bay from the dining room because it was not there originally. Woodwork was also removed from the house, but not by us. This was not of a distinctive architectural character. What we removed was designed in the manner of Asher Benjamin - two marble mantelpieces. Also some heavy iron grill work. Windows were removed from the dining room and parlor. They would have to be replaced. We boarded them up. We had planned to take flooring as well, but as it turned out, flooring that was there was on top of sub flooring. Narrow oak flooring of a later date is all that is there.

(J. Cooke)

Q. Mr. Fairbanks, you mentioned that in the event somebody purchased the building, you would assist in the restoration by lending a hand with your plans. You wouldn't return the original materials?

A. I think we would like to see your plan. If it goes to a private party, I think not, but if it becomes a public effort, I think that might be feasible. That's just off the top of my head. I would have to see your plan - your proposal.

Q. Wouldn't you agree that would be the best way to reproduce it, by returning the original material?

A. No. If some suitable other use does not work out, we'd have to work out another arrangement with Mary and Jeff. I think they would say "Yes". They want to see Roswell Gleason's material artifacts honored and we can do that at the museum. The family has given us paintings of Roswell Gleason, his wife and daughter.

The house has been regularly vandalized and broken into. On one occasion a truck was backed up into the house and close to \$19,000 worth of contents were removed.

A. (Jeff) The question is not putting a bronze placque on the house-- that's an honor--but actually getting someone to take care of it. Someone with a lot of money and a lot of guts. Mary was mugged in the house five times.

Q. M. Smith How do you know?

A. (Jeff) Jonathan and Mrs. Bowker were friends for many years.

Q. (To Fairbanks) Have you seen the will?

A. (Fairbanks) No.

A. (Jeff) I have seen the will.

Mrs. Bowker was assaulted and mugged several times because she was little, considerably older than most of her neighbors, and alone.

There have been numerous break-ins throughout the area.

W. Dalton My house has been broken into. With her, it was different, because "they knew she was a small 90-year old lady living there".

M. Rothman Q. Were you aware that the Commission was considering designation?

J. Fairbanks A. Meaning that it was in the minds of a designating committee?

M. Myers It was part of a listing of initial designations since fall. We tried several times to contact Mrs. Bowker - sent correspondence, and also by phone.

Jeff: Mary had two falls and was in and out of the hospital.

(L. Blank) Q.: You had indicated that it would be very expensive. (About \$50,000.) Would I be correct in assuming that you mean museum type restoration?

A. Yes. If you just want to make sure the roof doesn't leak (and it does) and the foundations are not rotted (and they are), and you just want to make it a livable place, but not fully restore it; it would be less.

L. Blank Q. What would it cost to make it livable?

A. That is not my business.

We took the plastered wall off - cleaned it down to original wallpaper; have made reproductions of original wallpaper which we will make available to any organization which might be doing restoration.

(No other representatives came forward from interest groups or local organizations or public agencies.)

MEMBERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC

Bill Wolczak offered the following remarks: I live in the old

Blake House at Edward Everett Square in Dorchester. What Mr. Fairbanks has just said would pose an enormous problem to buy the house. I was in the house after they removed the living room and parlor. The two rooms are a wreck now. In order to convince someone to move into the house, chandeliers would have to be replaced etc. Vandalism has occurred partly because windows are boarded up in front. They have removed all the shutters. I would love to see it as a landmark. It would be great

for the neighborhood. It would be very important to the area and to the city actually, but it is probably the wrong step to take if these things couldn't be brought back - such as the original fireplaces. How can you duplicate marble fireplaces? It could be restored cheaply but then it would look cheap. I would love to live in a house like that, but under the circumstances, with everything removed, wrought iron work badly ripped out, etc., to replace with a reasonable facsimile would be very expensive. Unless the Landmarks Commission should somehow get an endowment for it, it would be futile to declare it a landmark and not come up with a lot of money. Otherwise it will rot away or burn away.

(H. Wood) Q. As an expert witness in living in old houses which are designated and prone to vandalism, do you think if people had lived in it, it would be salable?

A. This is a problem in certain areas. If that house were as it were in January, I would have no problem living in it. People would have been interested in it. It is a shame that it has been destroyed on the inside.

Bob Rugo, 29 Walton St., Dorchester indicated that he lives less than a half mile south of this house. Has been living there and a homeowner for two years and has been a City Planner working in Dorchester for 4½ years. He would love to own such a house. Very few people in the area were in contact with the owner - two or three neighbors in the street. Real Estate firm which Jeff McGuire had contacted is A.M. Johnson, Neponset Section of Dorchester--"not one of the most aggressive firms in the area". House on Tremlett Street in neighborhood of Roswell Gleason House will be sold for \$41,500 the first

of September. It is inferior to the Roswell Gleason House but is in excellent condition, and has one small apartment which brings in \$150-\$180 per month rent. Average house in neighborhood sells for \$20-\$25,000 in reasonably decent condition. It is very difficult to estimate value of Roswell Gleason House in good shape. If in excellent shape, it might have brought \$30-\$35,000. It is not in good condition, both because things have been removed and because it had been somewhat let go through the years. It would be hard to estimate whether it has a market value. Outside could be restored and inside could be made livable. He doesn't think it is worth \$3-\$4,000 to tear the house down. Land that goes with the house does not have a high value once house is torn down. New construction, either residential or commercial, is rather unlikely in the area. House is difficult because it is big. A single family could live there and possibly have a rental apartment. Tax assessment is relatively high because it has three separate parcels of land. Assessment is mostly on the land. There are ways to reduce the assessment. Mr. Rugo feels it should be designated, and that there are real estate brokers who could sell it as a single family residence for more than minus the \$3-\$4,000 it would cost to tear it down.

(J. Cooke) Q. What is assessed value?

(Rugo) A. \$9,000, I believe. House is \$3,000, each of lots is \$2,000. Adjacent land might be useful for neighbor next door. It is not prime commercial land.

The house is located at the edge of the area where the house was acquired for \$18,000 and sold for \$40,000 after investing \$5,000 in it. It is on the edge of a rapidly rising area. Getting someone into this house who could take care of it would certainly help the area. He feels the area has a good chance.

Jeff McGuire interjected that Russell Clapp lived at 100 Claybourne and purchased his house for \$19-\$20,000. After ten years, he sold it at a loss for \$16,000.

Bob Rugo is currently working on a survey in the Melville Park Area - Real Estate firms were contacted, and he received divergent comments - some felt values would increase, others felt values would decrease.

Mr. Dalton said that Mr. Clapp took a loss because his house had been broken into - a "nice" person who "sold out in shock".

It is important that the house be occupied.

Other sections of this city and more affluent suburbs have also been broken into including the Mayor's residence.

Residents of Claybourne Street have been trying to keep their houses up. Some streets in Dorchester are a mess because of absentee landlords and other circumstances.

(R. Lang) Q.

Mr. Rugo, are you aware of, or can you describe any plans or city programs that might be useful in helping find a secure future for this house?

A. There are some city programs that could be helpful to a resident or owner-occupant. There's a city homesteading program in that neighborhood that is basically selling properties that are in the hands of the Federal Government for foreclosures to owner-occupants. As a part of its support for that program, the City is making 312 rehabilitation loans available in that area. It is a source of 3% financing and renovation advice. There's also the City's Housing Improvement Program allowing a 20% rebate for the cost of renovation work done. In this particular case, I believe the building would qualify for a 40% rebate for restoration work because of its historical value. There is another totally private program which is former Dorchester Savings Bank, now First American Bank for Savings which has been very aggressively recruiting for home improvement mortgages. If someone were to go to the bank with this house, it would be tremendous publicity for them. The 312 loan and Housing Improvement Program are the two key things.

WITNESSES IN SUPPORT:

Mr. Luce added that Mr. Sherman Arnold, caretaker for building for Dorchester APAC told him (hearsay) that Mrs. Doris Graham, Executive Director of the local Area Planning Action Committee and abutter of this property on Washington Street, is very much in favor of this being designated.

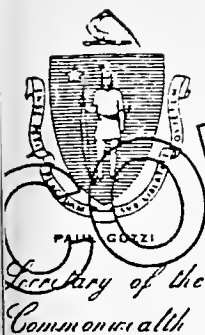
Roger Lang informed him that the Commission will be happy to accept a written statement from Mrs. Graham within the next three days.

The hearing adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

To Whom It May Concern:

We the undersigned, residents and/or homeowners of Claybourne St in
Dorchester, wish to see the Roswell Gleason house restored. We are opposed
to its demolition and we urge the authorities to move quickly to make it
possible for someone to acquire it before vandals and the weather harm it.
This house is admired by all, residents and passersby. It provides charm and
breathing space with its grassy and wooded lots. It has been enjoyed by the
children of our neighborhood with its many trees.

NAME	ADDRESS
1 Thomas F. Luce	92 Claybourne St. Dorchester
2 Clarence Simmons	89 Claybourne St. Dorchester
3 Daphne Reynolds	90 Claybourne St Dorchester
4 Imelle Elaine Washington	89 Claybourne St. Dorchester
5 Earlin Jarvis	84 Claybourne St Dorchester
6 Judith Luce	92 Claybourne St Dor. Mass.
7 Wallace Albord	90 Claybourne St Dorchester, Mass.
8 Annie English	90 Claybourne St Dor. Mass.
9 Sherman C. Arnold	110 Claybourne St. Dor. Mass.
10 H. Patricia Higgins	92 Claybourne St. Dor. Mass.
11 Ann Grady	92 Claybourne St. Dor. Mass. 02124
12 Mr. + Mrs. Celm R. Dalton	93 Claybourne St. Dorchester
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(617) 727-8470 **RECEIVED**

JUL 27 1977

July 15, 1977

Ms. Pauline Chase Harrell
Chairperson
Boston Landmarks Commission
City Hall
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Re: Landmark Designation for Roswell Gleason House

Dear Ms. Harrell:

Thank you for your letter of July 12 requesting comments on the proposed Landmark designation for the Roswell Gleason House, 101 Claybourne Street, Dorchester, MA 02124.

Although the Gleason House is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the MHC staff considers that the property does meet the eligibility criteria both for its architectural and historic significance. As an early example of Gothic Revival architecture, the property has both local and state significance. As the home of a renown pewterer and silver plate manufacturer whose work is included in many major American collections, the Gleason House gains additional significance.

For these reasons, the Massachusetts Historical Commission staff recommends that the Boston Landmarks Commission designate the Roswell Gleason House as a landmark and encourages the submission of the property for National Register nomination.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia L. Weslowski

Patricia L. Weslowski
Acting Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/CB/ed

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT ON STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Boston Landmarks Commission

Per Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for 1975), Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Landmark Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the property. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purposes of the statute.

The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation. The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers, and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitation to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily insure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reasons for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

As intended by the statute a wide variety of buildings and features are included within the area open to Landmark Designation, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. Some properties of truly exceptional architectural and/or historical value will permit only the most minor modifications, while for some others the Commission encourages changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with the properties' existing features and changed uses.

In general, the intent of the Standards and Criteria is to preserve existing qualities that cause designation of a property; however, in some cases they have been so structured as to encourage the removal of additions that have lessened the integrity of the property.

Introductory Statement on Standards and Criteria

page two

It is recognized that changes will be required in designated properties for a wide variety of reasons, all of which are not under the complete control of the Commission or the owners. Primary examples are:

- a) Building code conformance and safety requirements.
- b) Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems.
- c) Changes due to proposed new uses of a property.

The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for a particular property. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the property.

In some cases, priorities have been assigned within the Standards and Criteria as an aid to property owners in identifying the most critical design features.

The Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels: (1) those general ones that are common to almost all landmark designations (with three different categories for buildings, building interiors and landscape features); and (2) those specific ones that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standards and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
DESIGNATED AS LANDMARKS by the Boston Landmarks Commission

A. APPROACH

1. The design approach to the property should begin with the premise that the features of historical and architectural significance described within the Study Report must be preserved. In general this will minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.
2. Changes and additions to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. ("Later integral features" shall be the term used to convey this concept.)
3. Deteriorated material or architectural features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later integral features.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Imitation replacement materials are not allowed.
6. New additions or alterations should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.
7. New additions should be contemporary in design, not imitative of an earlier style or period.

8. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.
9. Priority shall be given to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or which it can be reasonably inferred may be in the future.
10. Color will be considered as part of specific standards and criteria that apply to a particular property.

3. EXTERIOR WALLS

I MASONRY

1. Whenever possible, original masonry and mortar should be retained.
2. Duplicate original mortar in composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile and method of application.
3. Repair and replace deteriorated masonry with material which matches as closely as possible.
4. When necessary to clean masonry, use gentlest method possible. Do not sandblast. Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
5. Avoid applying waterproofing or water repellent coating to masonry, unless required to solve a specific problem. Such coatings can accelerate deterioration.
6. In general, do not paint masonry surfaces. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.

II NON-MASONRY

1. Retain and repair original or later integral material whenever possible.
2. Retain and repair, when necessary, deteriorated material with material that matches.

C. ROOFS

1. Preserve the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape.
2. Retain original roof covering whenever possible.
3. Whenever possible, replace deteriorated roof covering with material which matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, texture, and installation detail.
4. Preserve architectural features which give the roof its character, such as cornices, gutters, iron filigree, cupolas, dormers, brackets.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

1. Retain original and later integral door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.
2. Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later integral window elements such as sash, lintels, sills, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorations and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. On some properties consideration will be given to changing from the original window details to other expressions such as to a minimal anonymous treatment by the use of a single light, when consideration of cost, energy conservation or appropriateness override the desire for historical accuracy. In such cases, consideration must be given to the resulting effect on the interior as well as the exterior of the building.

PORCHES, STEPS AND EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

1. Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later integral features including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ironwork, benches, fountains, statues and decorative items.

SIGNS, MARQUEES AND AWNINGS

1. Signs, marquees and awnings integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be retained and repaired where necessary.
2. New signs, marquees and awnings shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
3. New signs, marquees and awnings shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.
4. Signs, marquees and awnings applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building.
5. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.
6. Lettering forms or typeface will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally shall either be contemporary or relate to the period of the building or its later integral features.
7. Lighting of signs will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.
8. The foregoing notwithstanding, signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in structures being reused for purposes different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.

G PENTHOUSES

1. The objective of preserving the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape shall provide the basic criteria in judging whether a penthouse can be added to a roof. Height of a building, prominence of roof form, and visibility shall govern whether a penthouse shall be approved.
2. Minimizing or eliminating the visual impact of the penthouse is the general objective and the following guidelines shall be followed:
 - a) Location shall be selected where the penthouse is not visible from the street or adjacent buildings; set-backs shall be utilized.
 - b) Overall height or other dimensions shall be kept to a point where the penthouse is not seen from the street or adjacent buildings.
 - c) Exterior treatment shall relate to the materials, color and texture of the building or to other materials integral to the period and character of the building, typically used for appendages.
 - d) Openings in a penthouse shall relate to the building in proportion, type and size of opening, wherever visually apparent.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later integral landscape features that enhance the landmark property.
2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the landmark and its newer surroundings.

- c) New lighting fixtures which are contemporary in design, and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
- 4. If a fixture is to be replaced, the new exterior lighting shall be located where intended in the original design. If supplementary lighting is added, the new location shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.

J. REMOVAL OF LATER ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

- 1. Each property will be separately studied to determine if later additions and alterations can, or should, be removed. It is not possible to provide one general guideline.
- 2. Factors that will be considered include:
 - a) Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
 - b) Historic association with the property.
 - c) Quality in the design and execution of the addition.
 - d) Functional usefulness.

3. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the landmark or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the landmark.
4. Original layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas should be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the landmark.
5. Existing healthy plant materials should be maintained as long as possible. New plant materials should be added on a schedule that will assure a continuity in the original landscape design and its later adaptations.
6. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider maintaining existing vistas of the landmark.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

1. There are two aspects of exterior lighting:
 - a) Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
 - b) Quality of illumination on building exterior.
2. Wherever integral to the building, original lighting fixtures shall be retained. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
3. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches, as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
 - a) Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
 - b) Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Robert F. Walsh / Director

City Hall
1 City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
Telephone (617) 722-4300

M. Myers
R. House
Leah Hear

**AUG 11 1977
RECEIVED**

AUG 11 1977

Ms. Pauline Harrell, Chairperson
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Dear Ms. Harrell:

I am writing you today to endorse the Landmarks Commission's efforts to reserve and protect the Roswell Gleason House at 101 Claybourne Street, Dorchester.

The Gleason House could be a most important element in the City's improvement efforts in the Codman Square-Fields Corner section of Dorchester. As you know, the immediate neighborhood around the Gleason House has undergone many changes in the last ten years, both demographically and physically. Those changes have not been without problems, and 3 or 4 years ago the future of the neighborhood was very much in question.

Since that time, much has happened and been planned that leads me to be optimistic about the long term health and strength of the neighborhood. There have been a wide range of public programs and improvements, and private initiative and investment that I will only briefly touch on to indicate the thrust of the area.

Claybourne Street is within the Meetinghouse Hill Homesteading Area, which is a City/HUD effort that is starting to bear results after some months of operation. Included in the program are HUD foreclosed houses for Homesteading, rehabilitation assistance for qualified homeowners through the HUD '312' rehabilitation loan program, City 40% & 20% I.P. programs, and technical assistance. The Gleason House, with an owner occupant would be eligible for these programs. City of Boston capital improvements have been targeted to the Homesteading area to improve streets, sidewalks and lighting. Other public efforts in the area include the reconstruction of Bowdoin Street, the initiation of a Fields Corner Business District Program and the planned reconstruction of the Mandel School ballfield. Recently the City has initiated a series of programs to return vacant lots to productive use, either as additional yards for abutters or as community gardens.

In addition to these public efforts, many neighborhood groups are taking an active role in strengthening and improving the Gleason House area. Your designation of the Gleason House would be a great psychological boost to their efforts. We have found that active community groups are one of the best indicators of strength of a neighborhood, and that is the reason I feel confident about the neighborhood around the Gleason House.

Again, the BRA endorses your intention to designate the Gleason House, and I offer whatever assistance we can in your efforts.

Sincerely,

Robert Walsh
Director

FW:MM:tmg

no card

Property Of
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Library



